

The ♡
Girl I Left
Behind Me



A ♡
Romance of
Yesterday

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The
Girl I Left
Behind
Me





THE GIRLS WERE FAIR-YES, DANGEROUSLY FAIR

The Girl I Left Behind Me

By 

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*Author of "Through the Gates of
Old Romance," "Caroline of Court-
landt Street, etc."*

Pictures and Decorations

By 

JOHN RAE



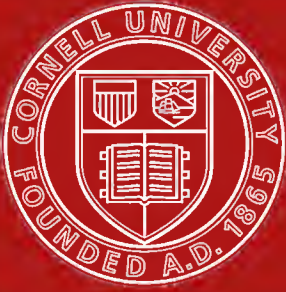
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TO
MRS. ADOLPH LADENBURG



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yes, dangerously
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*WHEN I am old,
And all Love's ancient fire
Be tremulous and cold,
My soul's desire!
Remember, if you may,
Nothing of you and me
but yesterday.*

Kensington Gardens, June.

CHAPTER I



IT was long, long ago in the sweet dusk that this tale begins. There were lilac trees and beds of pink anemones and blue hepaticas in many a city dooryard then. Those old stages "Lady Clinton" and "Robert Fulton" still creaked up and down the Broadway, which some ancient citizens persisted in calling Great George Street. Ladies were wondering if Marie Brouchard, a niece of Washington Irving's friend, would dare make her customers wear the threatened Parisian double hoopskirt, and gentlemen who were gentlemen were occupied with the fate of the Union Club, and whether they would be sent to gaol if they attended a forbidden bull-baiting in near-by Hobuck. Gotham was still the Gotham that you will find depicted in some waggish papers that startled the town at the beginning of the last century. Men who

were the grandsons of signers of the *Declaration of Independence* were often pointed out as men of family; wit sometimes secured a man membership in a Club when money would n't. Girls fell in love with a pair of blue eyes, a rakish air, or what you will, and left *St. John's Park* elegance to live on nothing a year. Young bucks understood the significance of what the great *Dr. Johnson* has said about claret, port, and brandy. "If brandy was to be left for heroes, why not begin with claret and port?" was their answer. Still they read their *Bibles* on the *Seventh Day* and were apt at quotations when their parents were not expecting them. All the town took to nightcaps before the stroke of midnight, except at *New Year's* birth. It had somewhat of an *English* flavour about it, that town of yesterday. Very few of its inhabitants went to *Bond Street* for habiliments, but they treasured the traditions of their red-coated grandsires. And one thing I have forgotten, — the girls were fair, yes, dangerously fair;

many a girl of threescore and ten to-day will tell you so.

Sir Cyril Stephenson thought so as he stood on the steps that led to the side entrance of the new Astor House. It was dusk, as I have said, but there was another mist before the gay young baronet's eyes, and a stifled something in his throat,—the sort of half-articulate noise a chap makes when he is about to take aim at a plunging tiger, skirmish with death, or face a suffering tailor armed with ten years' back bills. Sir Cyril had seen something that had made a fresher colour come to his cheeks and a new brightness to his eyes. Then he looked off to the river where the good ship "Britannia" was lying. The "Britannia" was sailing home on the morrow, and when the gallant Irishman thought of that the something in his throat went dangerously near his heart. "By Jove!" said Sir Cyril.

This was the second time he had seen her; the first glimpse was obtained as he was wan-

dering past St. Paul's churchyard on his way to his hotel. She was coming out of the narrow path to the Broadway Gate, followed by a bristling dragon in black. Sabbath morning service was just over, and he was not the only man who changed the course of his way a little and stood still for a moment and just gazed! There was something about her that made men look. You couldn't quite explain the thing. Perhaps her hair had more of the sunshine on it than most heads, and weary eyes followed it. Perhaps her lips curved in unconscious merriment that sent stray elves all along the street. There was a twistfulness about her, a magnetic tenderness. You felt her coming like the wind, and you could imagine her confiding certain things in your ear,—your own ear. And when she had passed you looked to see whirling rose leaves. Sir Cyril said to himself that she was like a fairy.

Now she was alone, and almost gleeful in her sense of freedom. The dragon was off

guard. As she reached the corner of the Astor House where the Irishman stood, her eyes met his with a look full of mock modesty and allurement. The bonnet of gauze and roses moved a trifle; there was a roguish dimple in the warm pink of the cheek. Sir Cyril thought he saw. It was at that moment that there came the clutch in his throat, and he gave vent to the recorded ejaculation.

Sir Cyril Stephenson, sixth of his famed Kilkenny name, and at present bestowing his valuable services upon the Foreign Office, was in love with love. Women form the background of most men's lives, but in Sir Cyril's they were always on the stage, and, sad to relate, generally shifting the scenes. The names that had been dear to the young gentleman were like a garden of sweet English flowers. Of course there was plenty of shamrock about in that garden, for, as they said at O'Grady Castle, "his Worship enlivened the demesne every autumn—the Saints preserve his handsome face!" Ah,

yes, Cyril Patrick Gournthum Stephenson loved the fair sex, and what member of the fair sex could ever resist a baronet, — a baronet of twenty-three who was called “the pink of the Albany”? A maid might scorn the wooing of a duke, for a duke hasn’t the subtle attraction of a baronet, especially in Kilkenny, but no woman could scorn Sir Cyril. A picture of his father by Romney hangs in the National Gallery, and he is said to be “the living image of the dead Squire.” Pause under that picture, you sentimental chits who hunt romance; observe the beautifully chiselled features, the liquid green eyes, the proud lips, the brown hair unpowdered. What would he say if he could speak? He is the beau ideal, the dream lover, a man with lips of fire. His lovely ghost whispers something to each woman who gazes up at the portrait. The portrait is the shadow of our hero. But there is one point of difference, — the sixth baronet’s chin is stronger than his father’s.

“Hello, my lord!” said the man who guarded

the bar. "*What can I do for your lordship? A Webster cocktail? Some peach bitters—or is it a water night?*" Sir Cyril was entering the always crowded bar-room of Johnny Astor's most famous venture.

"*Nothing to-night, Tom. I want my sea-legs to-morrow.*"

"*Guess we'll miss you about here. Hope you'll think of your old pals when you see the dooks over there. Say, isn't it wonderful now for you to know that old dook who licked Napoleon—and isn't it wonderful for me, Tom Jenkins, to know you? Say, ain't you sorry to leave us? Perhaps you've a gal you're struck on in the old country?*"

The boy smiled, but it was only a half-smile.

"*Perhaps she's waiting for you?*"

"*She is waiting for me, Tom,*" came the slow words,—"*waiting for me!*"

"*Is she pretty?*" asked the man, with the fearlessness of one who might some day be the President of his country.

"They say so in London," came the answer.

The bar-tender winked at the glass he was shining. "Money!" his open eye said, but his lips said nothing.

Sir Cyril went over to a table and sat down. A page was lighting a lamp by the change desk, and for a moment the young baronet thought he was back in Boodles with the musty Club footmen fetching in the lights.

"Say, I'd like to be you!" shouted Tom Jenkins, who was a cheerful soul and could n't stand a customer's depression.

"Would you?" mocked the other, thinking the man was referring to his station in life. In his subconscious mind was a vision of O'Grady Castle, a second Rackrent Hall. Starving tradesmen were sitting in every room in long funeral rows. At the foot of the Grand Staircase a tall pale girl was waiting for him in a dress of cloth of gold. She was the heiress, Lady Aveline Toole, soon to be a Stephenson.



BROADWAY, WHICH SOME ANCIENT CITIZENS PERSISTED
IN CALLING GREAT GEORGE STREET ..

"You're such a good looker," came the voice from behind the row of Waterford decanters.

The Irishman stuck out his chest. His thoughts had come back to earth; they were there in that hotel. "I say," he said,—"I say"; but Tom Jenkins was busy uncorking sherry.

A moment later he was glad that he hadn't asked about her; it was profaning her somehow. With an elegant Piccadilly stride he sauntered out of the bar.

Once on the staircase he fairly flew to the Grand Lounge. Then with guilty steps he made for the desk. "I say," he stammered to the dozing clerk. From where he stood he could catch a reflection of himself in the glass, and he blushed as he remembered the words of one Jenkins. While he stood there hesitating, the mirror suddenly reflected a fluttering ribbon, a waving feather, and a woman's smile, arch but unintended.

Then Sir Cyril forgot his Piccadilly stride.

CHAPTER II



*O*F course she knew that he had followed her. He knew also that she knew it. She was leaning over one of those iron balconies that used to decorate the huge drawing-room windows of the *Astor House*. Below her were the tides of the *Broadway*, flowing north and south;—crowds whirled and eddied and then dashed into the sudden darkness beyond *Lispenard's meadows* and below *Trinity*. Stages clanged their bells, curb-venders shouted, guest-catchers called out the delights of the *Museum* just opposite, toilers of all ages whistled and sang. The bells of the city were proclaiming the death of the day. The *April* night was free of care, and a new moon was peeping shyly over roofs and tree-tops and silvering rivers and sea.

The roses, the feather, and the fluttering ribbon were still now; but did he see a flicker,

a humorous imp, steal from the land of forbidden smiles and hover near her lips? She seemed to be always smiling. He wanted to laugh aloud—his heart was only a boy's heart.

Then she became a startled thing, a bird in a net, a trapped woodland creature. The man blocked her retreat to the window, and so, inch by inch, she bent nearer the street until the curve of her bonnet hid her face.

For a minute he pondered.

With all the grace of a Vestris she walked to the end of the balcony.

He decided that she was brazen. She had noticed him, she knew that he was there, and now she was luring him on. There was a mystery about her that was enchanting. Her boldness was adorable. Manlike, he decided that he would give her tit for tat. A woman who could walk so proudly and make her high red heels click with such a roguish mocking air should have boldness for boldness. So, with his

very best manner and his beaver in his hand, Sir Cyril said in a voice that startled himself, "Madam, you smiled."

The face turned to his was a startled child's. "I did n't," the girl said.

For a moment he would have given his tongue to recover his speech. It seemed almost criminal. His gallantry had never led him into such a direct attack before; the blush of a few minutes ago came back reinforced.

The eyes of the creature before him began twinkling. "I did n't smile—I laughed," she said.

"By Jove! you did!" he echoed.

"You looked so funny," she continued.

Sir Cyril had never been called funny by a woman. It did n't suit his own sense of humour. You can imagine how he took it.

"You looked so sort of lonely, I mean, as if you were mourning somebody—your sweet-heart."

Sir Cyril thought of the Lady Aveline

Toole, and his expression didn't grow any pleasanter.

"You are rather good at surmising."

"All people who come from the country are."

"I shouldn't say you came from the country."

"Wouldn't you, really? You are a nice man! I have buttercup dust all over my chin." She showed him her lovely little pointed chin, just as if they were playing some nursery game, "and a frog in each shoe." She showed him a pair of slippers, bewitching little things.

Her eyes rested on the slippers for a time as if she loved them; then she whispered irrelevantly, "My aunt says I am far too countryish; she called me a cow yesterday, because I lagged before shop windows."

Her listener laughed. "I should call you something less heavy than that—something off the dull earth, up in the air—something—"

"Father calls me Thrushes—I whistle, you

see; I don't keep time very well, but I always get the melody."

"What a sweet, odd name! You're quite different from any girl I have ever met."

"Yes, I suppose I am different from English girls. I shouldn't talk to you, should I? Aunt would n't like it; she hated to leave me."

"She's gone," his eyes said.

"You see it's this way. Her brother, my uncle Tobias, is ill in Flushing—yes, he's very ill—but she couldn't take me, he hates my father."

"And he has never seen you," he put in.

"No, he never wanted to; he thinks me a chip of the old block. The old block, you know, is something Satan sits upon."

"I shouldn't think man or devil could sit on you—pardon one of your Americanisms."

"Oh, how nice you are, a second time! I'm only seventeen, just seventeen, and you do think me quite grown up?"

He looked at her as she looked at him—so



"LAGGED BEFORE SHOP WINDOWS"

eager, so fluttering. Her eyes were bluer than any Irish eyes he had seen; fair April weather seemed to dance in them, soft skies and sunshine. Her skin was white, with only the faintest touch of pink. A poet would have said her lips were a Cupid's bow. As she stood there with the shadow of the great house upon her and the grey day turning black, for the moon was pale as yet, she looked some girl vision of immortal youth. Her manner might have bewildered any man. Now she had the tricks of Mayfair; now the simplicity of the country, a far-away sylvan country. When she raised her head and showed the girdle of Venus about her slender throat, the Irishman thought of stately beauties of some earlier age. She was Beatrix Esmond in a room where candles flamed and men felt hotly for their swords. When she asked him her quaint breathless questions, she was a wood thing hurrying through fields of wind-tossed daisies—a fairy thing welcoming the dreaming moon.

"It's fizzing to be young," he said.

"You're not very old yourself," came the retort.

"The Irish never grow old."

"You have seven lines about each eye—yes, I count seven."

"That must be for luck."

Her laugh was a challenge to Father Time.

"What's your name?" was her next remark.

"Cyril Stephenson—Sir Cyril Stephenson."

"Really a Sir."

"You think I should go to the Zoo!"

"Why, I've never seen one before!"

"They're quite common at home."

"Would your wife be a lady?" She was much interested.

"I hope so."

"Would she wear a crown?"

"All the Stephenson crowns are waiting in Jerusalem."

"You sound rather sacrilegious."

"They're pawned, I mean."

"I wish you had one for her, women look so beautiful in crowns. I saw a picture of Victoria in Godey's Lady Book. It was lovely. We never wear crowns in America. Some girls in New York wear Jenny Lind wreaths of camellias, but where I come from they never wear anything."

"All uncrowned queens," he jested.

"Perhaps you wouldn't say that if you could see them. They are not even like me, most of them." She was trying very hard to be humble. "They become fish-wives when they are very young; fish-wives salt the cod fish, you know, or stay at home and slave, watching and watching for ships to come back. The name of the place where I live is Gloucester. Perhaps you've been there? You haven't? I daresay you are not very sorry. It's all old and grey, and the streets run up and down little hills, and you smell salt fish and the sea, and another scent like jasmine, all mixed together. Oh, yes, you'd

like the scent — you need n't poke your nose up at the thought of it. You'll never have to come there anyway! Isn't there fish-drying in Ireland? You are making game of me!"

"No, I'm not. I like hearing about it."

"Do you, really? Then I'll tell you of Beauport—that's the name of our house."

"They all come there," he said mischievously.

She pretended not to have heard his interruption.

"It hangs just over the sea," she whispered again; her speech was always running into whispers. "It's very, very old, for it was built when Anne was Queen. It's a fat old gentleman sort of a house and it spreads all about the ground. I say always that it looks like father. Then there are wide cool rooms and a great hall where Captain Horry used to have turtle feasts. He owned the first American fleet of Indiamen. That was in colony days, before we parted from England. Captain Horry brought everything from England—every brick. You

would think it quite like a place in your country. It has such a dear comfy air. We love it—Captain Crawley and I.”

“Captain Crawley!” he repeated indignantly.

“He’s my father,” she laughed. “I often call him Captain Crawley because he looks so young. He’s fifty-eight, but he seems only your age.”

“And what does he take?”

“Gin, I think,”—giggling.

“I don’t mean that.”

“He says his imagination has kept him young. He’s always pretending. When Maria makes mistakes with the dinner and burns our monthly roast, he just pretends it’s all right. He pretends that everything is much nicer than it really is—about the world, I mean. He says the average man is a good man if you’ll only get to know him, and women are just human angels—all but Aunt. She doesn’t approve of him, you know. She says what he calls his

philosophy is just a fine excuse for indolence. 'You'll end in the poorhouse,' is her pet remark. She says that I ought to live with her and get out of a slipshod life, but the Captain says she'd make me too orderly and prim and altogether a bore. He says, 'If your income falls into the washtubs, don't let all your nature follow it.' I wouldn't leave the Captain and the sea for anything!"

"He's just my sort," he said. "What a way he must have with creditors! He sounds as if he belonged to Kilkenny."

She forgot him for a moment and bent nearer the crowd. It was candle-lighting time in Beauport, with the Captain at his bit of supper. They were missing her there at that frugal meal—the Captain and Maria.

As he studied her, he asked himself what it was about her that awakened all his protective instinct. Her eyes were like two stars of blue fire that were opening gates to strange forgotten yearnings. Sometimes when she smiled he saw



"CANDLE-LIGHTING TIME"

his dead mother's smile. When her voice took low wistful notes, he was a child again in a large Irish nursery—a child crying at the windows because his nurse had told him that the lambs were being carted away to be killed and the larks would die in the snow. Hers was an eerie seductiveness—she was so care-free, so natural, so rare. His manhood longed to armour her. His arms were hungry to draw her nearer and press her blood-red lips to his. He had loved many women, but he had never loved with tears in his eyes. The gods were brewing him a delicious nectar.

“Look!” she cried.

Some lads were carrying branches of apple blossoms into the chief doorway of the hotel, and she leaned over to catch at some of the waxen things.

“You evidently believe what they say of stolen sweets.”

“I only caught a handful.”

She began making the pink and white flow-

ers into what she called a "posey," he eying it all the while.

"Some of us never succeed in obtaining a handful," he said.

"Ah, you're trying to get my sympathy to lure me into fetching you a whole bushel, aren't you? Men are such children—such sly children."

He laughed.

"I think they must be for a ball," he said.

"A ball—a real ball!"

"Why, have you never been to one?"

"Never, and the Captain has taught me every dance. He says that I can do a minuet just like his mother did. Of course minuets are out of fashion now. The Captain and I often do them in the hall on cold winter nights. Aunt does n't believe in dancing; she says that it makes her sad to see people with wits acting as if they belonged to Bedlam. Why, she even thinks her hero, General Washington, would have been a greater man if he could have resisted a reel."

*"I'd like to waltz you." He began to hum.
"Geistes Schwingen."*

*"The things we should like to do—they are
always vanishing into the sunset like my Gloucester ships."*

*"But they come again at dawn." He was
closer to her now.*

"Some don't!"

*Her lips were still, but all her youth was
crying out to live.*

*He looked toward the sea, but the trees in
St. Paul's yard hid it from him. He had almost
forgotten the morrow.*

*"What's your name, little girl?" he asked,
a new strength in his voice.*

*"Julia," she said. "They call me Judy."
Her eyes were raised to his.*

*"Come in, Judy," he faltered. "It's almost
dark."*

CHAPTER III



WHEN he left her, he ran past dozing pages, hungry bucolics making for the dining-room, old ladies wondering at the hour—all the world of an overflowing hostelry. He felt a primeval instinct to dance and sing. He wanted to tell “every mither’s son of them” that he was in love. When a man is in love, he must tell somebody. Sir Cyril was fortunate in possessing a man servant.

“Denby!” he called, when he reached his chamber. “’Pon my word, where is the mick?”

A short oldish man, looking very much like an overfed church pigeon, hopped out into the centre of the room. “I was reading, Sir!” he said. “Just a nice little morsel in the ‘Dublin Times.’ They do say that Erin, Lord Toole’s horse, has a chance for the Derby.”

"What care I for Lord Toole and his horses? I shall be at Toole Hill soon enough!"

"What a temper he's in!" said Denby, aside, but fully intending that his master should hear him.

"It's not temper, man—it's love."

"The Saints preserve us—love!"

Denby shook his head; he had seen his master in the same state of mind before.

"Lady Aveline is very dhas!" said the servant. He had been with Sir Cyril for fifteen years, and in Kilkenny servants own their masters in less than a decade.

"Don't trifle with me," said Sir Cyril. He said "traful with me," for he couldn't always hide his brogue.

"Sure, Sir, she is putty creatur."

"Don't I know it without having your ugly face remind me of it constantly? The lady who has my love is an American."

"The last one lived in Dumfries."

"Shall I throw the water jug at you?"

“I hope not, Sir; I should not like to forget my place.”

“Oh, Denby, I’m hard hit, man. This is different—yes, different from all the others. She has a true Irish nature, and such a tongue and such eyes. I saw her yesterday coming out of church, and I’ve been talking with her, Denby—yes, talking with her. I wish you could hear her speak. Her voice is clear and low; you might listen to the like in Boro Wood. She has such a way with her—a dear teasing way. She’s here and there and everywhere, all in a minute.”

“It’s you that would always be hunting a canny vixen. It’s up and away in the morning and not home till day’s dead with you. And then you’re better pleased if she gets to earth.”

“I could die just to kiss her!”

“Well, don’t die yet awhile. Remember the property would go to the English branch, and yer would n’t have O’Grady belonging to the likes of them, would yer?”

“Such eyes, man!”

"Sure, yer've told me of them already, git on to her nose."

"It's like marble."

"I don't care for the sound of it."

"Her hair—it's no colour at all. It's just a mist hanging over a garden."

"The sort of hair they all have at Paddy Green's Theatre."

"Man, she's not an actress!"

"She's forward enough, at any rate. Who made you known to her?"

"Confound your impudence, Denby, your infernal impudence! What right have you to run a lady down—a lady you do not know? Are you forgetting that you are servant to a gentleman? You're forgetting your manners and your country! The Scotch side of you is coming out. 'Pon my soul, sir, what right have you to question me? I have a mind to send you off without a character this very minute. I won't stand it, I tell you. As for the lady of my affections, be she black or white, I'll crack

every bone of your body if you dare speak her name again."

"I've never heard it, Sir!" said Denby. He was sure to have the last word.

"She's a witch," sighed Sir Cyril, crossing to his window and gazing out at the night. A hush seemed to have fallen upon the usually noisy town.

"Ground rents are going down at O'Grady, Sir, don't you be forgetting it, Sir. Old Mrs. Tolly said, before we came over to Washington, there was but five dozen of port in your great-grandfather's cellars. Lord knows what the new crop of praties will be! No one has ever touched your timber, Sir—not since the Irish kings. Sure, wasn't it James that made the first baronet, but the Stephensons were great people before that. When Richard II came over to Ireland, 't was a Stephenson who showed him about. There were Stephensons who were so fond of fighting that when they finished fighting among themselves they went yonder to

England. Sure, you've read of them at Agincourt, and the siege of Rouen, and Flodden. The Virgin Queen would have liked to wed a Stephenson, but he was n't to be caught. You're a sloy family, you are, Sir—I've always said it of yer." Here Denby only winked, forgetting that he was trying to point out that Castle O'Grady needed a wealthy mistress.

"Why this tirade?"

"I'm defending the honour of the family."

"Indeed!"

"Lady Aveline loves yer."

"How dare you?"

"I suppose yer think they all love yer."

Sir Cyril's eyes flashed; then he smiled.

"Oh, Denby, if she cared for me! If Julia cared for me—Julia Crawley!"

"I don't like the name, begging your pardon, Sir."

"It's a dear name. Judy Crawley might have trifled with tradesmen in Curzon Street. If you were fond of your learning, Denby, you

would know that *Mrs. Rawdon Crawley*, of that immortal work '*Vanity Fair*,' was a *Crawley of Crawley* and lived in the street I have just mentioned."

"It's not an Irish name at all; and as for *Curzon Street Patrick Burke's* sister went as parlour maid to a house in yer *Curzon Street*, and bless me if they didn't half starve the wench. I've heard sorry enough tales of that street to have done with it."

"Is that so?" mimicked *Sir Cyril*. "Then you are resolved not to like the lady, no matter what I say?"

"If two of us felt the same about her, there might be trouble. A man's a man inside of his coat. Sure, I haven't seen your *Miss Crawley*, and shall never have the luck, as we are sailing to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" sighed *Sir Cyril*.

"*Lord Mornington* has set the wedding for *June*."

"I'll marry her!"

“Who said you would n’t?”

“I’ve been entrapped—that’s what it is.”

“What’s entrapped you?”

“The pater’s rotten debts, twenty thousand pounds lost at écarté. The sins of the fathers—you know the old saying. If he had n’t died head over heels in debt, I might have married to please myself.”

“Lady Aveline is a wife to be proud of.”

“I’m sick of pride—it’s about all we have left in Ireland.”

Denby went to a chest and laid out his master’s evening things.

The room was almost in darkness, for neither of the men cared to light the new-fashioned gas tube, and Denby had sent a maid for a lamp.

“Rum little place, this New York!” mused the baronet. “I shall be sorry to leave it. The air is full of Sim and sunshine everywhere. I think John Bull will be pleased with what I have done for the fisheries. No more rows be-

tween the States and Canada. Though I don't love England any too much, as she belongs to Ireland, I'm glad to have done something for her. The people have been good to us. I've never met any like them except in Cavan."

"Sure, they're most of them young Irish—the spirit of Ireland is here in a more bracing air. Have you seen the letter on the bed, Sir?"

"What letter?"

Denby fumbled about for the thing, and at last he found it.

Apart by the faint starlight Sir Cyril read:

"Miss Hone presents her compliments and begs that Sir Cyril Stephenson will honour the Assembly with his presence this evening. Her aunt Mrs. Van der Gast has had the honour of staying at Castle O'Grady in the late baronet's time, and if she had been in health would have paid Sir Cyril other courtesies. She sends her best felicitations by Miss Hone to-night. Enclosed please find a ticket."

"They want me to do a jig or two," said the boy. He was thinking of the girl who had

never been to a ball. Her eager eyes were haunting him.

"You will have jigs enough at O'Grady after the wedding. We had better go on board ship to-night."

"Don't—don't talk."

Sir Cyril went over to look at the stars again. His thoughts, mad, impetuous, were like sky-rockets shooting off to lovelier worlds.

"One night," he cried, "one night to live! I shall crowd all the stars into one May night."

"What's up now?" asked Denby's twinkling eyes.

For answer some brushes were thrown at his head.

CHAPTER IV



THE dragon was away; he knew that. In Kilkenny he was looked up to as a man who was without fear, and yet he trembled as he stood in the passage leading to Julia Crawley's room.

A woman servant passed him, and he found his voice. "Would you be kind enough to tell Miss Crawley that Sir Cyril Stephenson desires to speak with her a moment?"

"I seen her just taking to the stairs, Sir," was the answer.

He looked, and saw a white figure hurrying through the lower hall; she seemed always to be hurrying away.

Down passage after passage she ran. They were both out of breath when he finally caught up with her by the ballroom door.

"I was n't going to let you escape," he said. "I knew all these lamps would catch you."

Women are so like moths — they all seek the light."

"We love to see the world, you horrid man!"

"And be seen by it!"

For answer she smiled a sort of mocking "Yes, thank you," and pulled back the yellow silk curtains that guarded the door.

Behind them was a scene of almost dazzling radiance. The room was perhaps the largest public room in New York since the destruction of the famous Coffee Room in the old City Hotel and the last governor had decided there was to be no waltzing in the City Hall. It was square in shape, and hung with the curtains that once decorated the sal n of that famous lady, Madam Aaron Burr. The street side was flanked by four enormous windows, that the night made into great pools of liquid blue. Servants were lighting bracket gas jets covered with festive white silk shades. Portraits of an earlier day by Stuart, Dunlap, the Peales, West, and many

foreign artists hung along the white panels. The likenesses of these early New Yorkers who had founded the dances called the York Assemblies—the earliest dancing organization in America—gave the room a note of distinction. They brought the forgetful living in closer touch with the delightful vista of the past. They seemed to sigh out at one, “Ah, we too have danced, though now we are dead. Think of us dancing, and not of our sordid humdrum moments. In sublunary times the world said that our dancing was a waste of precious hours, but now we know that the long spaces in which our finery was laid aside were the maddest forfeitures—we lie so still—so still in our decaying slippers, and our arms that once held warm slim waists are folded forever and forever. To-night our ghosts can smile a little. When the violins go trailing off to the lands where all lovely sounds have flown, catch the echo of our lost melodies and dance before your steps grow weary, for the time of year is spring.”



"CROQUET ON THE PARSON'S LAWN"

Over the likenesses of belles and beaux garlands of lilies twined up the silken cords, and before the mirrors were the branches of shimmering apple blossoms. The workmen were tying them in place, as the two stood gazing into the room. They were not the only spectators, for in one corner was a gesticulating group of gentlemen, evidently directors of the ball. "The floor isn't waxed enough!" they heard one say, and another was remarking on the value of a portrait of his grandfather supposed to have been done by Reynolds. "Drat him!" his listener said. "I'm tired of hearing of your ancestors. There's too much talk of birth and all that in this republic. Whatever may be said on the subject, the people who had a proper place in the old country weren't running over here; so, if you feel yourself above me, why, you had better go back. This is the land of equality." "Tish, sir," grinned the other, "you know that we belong to the best people; if we did n't, should we be on the Floor Committee for these dances? It

would grieve me to see an underbred person here—a person without any claim to social recognition but his aspirations!”

“Are his eyes on my back?” asked Julia, suddenly. “I know they are black gimlet eyes, just like my aunt’s.”

“Old fuss—feather—I wish he’d get out and leave the room to us.”

“He’s looking at me through a quizzing glass.”

“If he looks again, I shall stand in front of you.”

“I suppose he thinks social aspirations should be stared at.”

“I have received an invitation,” he said, manlike.

“Have you?” she asked, a catch in her voice. “Are you going to dance the night away in this wonderful room with the blossoms swaying? And look at those dark windows? Soon the stars will grow big and white there, like immortal lilies. And the floor is too divine

—*I am sliding my feet under my dress, so the old man cannot see, and it feels like our Gloucester Lake in winter.*”

He didn't say anything, but he went a step nearer to her.

“Do you imagine that I would come here and dance without you?”

She glanced at him archly. “To hear you talk you would think me quite town-bred and going to a ball once a week. Remember, Sir, I am not used to dances and the polite world. Aunt says my Indian blood is always coming out. In Gloucester our greatest treat is going to the post-office in a new print or playing croquet on the parson's lawn. Sometimes there's a squire or two among the crowd, or a Cambridge young gentleman who has failed in his exams and needs the sea air. The Gloucester girls love seeing a real gentleman. I wonder what they would do if they saw you.”

“Take me for a peep show and give me a penny, I dare say,” he laughed.

"I would love to dance with you," she said, letting the gliding feet creep out from under the muslin to tease him. Her lashes brushed her cheeks. The garrulous old gentlemen had stopped their conversation to watch her.

"Quit your palavering," he said.

"I wish my aunt were here," she whispered demurely.

"I'm glad she is n't!"

"It would be much nicer for you."

"I don't see it!"

"I'm her poor relation. She wants to marry me off."

A cloud crossed his face, and she felt his sudden change of mood.

"I am a silly! Forgive me!"

"You're just the dearest thing in the world."

"I'm so happy!"

"So am I."

"We two are different from other people."

"I thought of you all the time I was dress-



"I HAD MY DAGUERRETYPE DONE YESTERDAY
IN THE WALL STREET GALLERY"

ing. I was off in Ireland at your castle. Tell me, do you ever have dances there?"

"Often!" he mused.

She saw that he had a strange look in his eyes.

He was remembering those words of Denby's about jigs after the wedding.

"I should like to see the world—old castles, with romances and haunted rooms—something different from dear little Beauport. When I look out from my windows across the sea, I dream of them. Just think of never going anywhere or never doing anything—just sort of dreaming."

"Philosophers have not been able to decide which is better—the dreaming or the living, the wanting or the realisation."

"I should like to see your castle."

"O'Grady." He smiled joyously.

"What is it like, tell me!"

They had walked to a seat under the apple blossoms.

“It’s very grand and very humble. It’s a true Irish home. A race of happy-go-lucky Irishmen have lived there.”

“It sounds as if it would suit me.”

His face had clouded again.

She looked into his eyes and remembered the eyes of a caged eagle.

Then he grew calm. “There are chairs from Versailles, and peasant chairs, and velvet by homespun. The fireplaces could roast an ox. There’s a forest of fir trees creeping up to the very door. In the dark passages are servants we have forgotten to pay,—impudent creatures, all heart and stomach, like Denby. Denby’s my man, you know. Oh! It’s a rum old place, with chamber things in the drawing-room and kitchen things in the chambers.”

“We’re like children—first I tell you everything and then you tell me everything.” She almost touched his hand.

“Everything?” he said softly.

"Well, of course you have more to tell than I have."

"You'll have a grand lot to tell one day."

"Shall I tell it?" she asked. She had seen his meaning look.

"To some lucky beggar!"

"I'll tell him about you first."

"You will soon forget me."

"Do you think I look like a woman who could forget?"

"Women always look as if they could n't."

"Do you know, I believe that some of them just pretend to forget. It is a sort of stupid pride. We never forget our loveliest hours, no matter how far we have wandered from them."

"I shall never forget this."

She tried to hide a blush.

"I wish I had a picture of you as you look now."

"I had my daguerreotype done yesterday in the Wall Street Gallery. You might ask Aunt for it. I was dressed like this."

"You look as if you were waiting for the ball to begin."

The expression of her face changed, and he knew that he had hurt her a second time.

"Don't care, child!" he said. "You shall go to the ball. You shall go with me!"

She jumped to her feet and clapped her hands. "What do you mean, Sir Cyril?"

"You are unknown here, and you could use the card they sent me. As for me, an Irishman can always get into a party, whether he is asked or not."

She did one or two jumping steps that Captain Crawley had taught her in a Sailors' Rigadoon. The bickering gentlemen raised their eyeglasses with proper indignation.

"You're coming with me?" he cried.

"Heavens, I don't know!"

"Heavens, you must come!"

"It's the one thing I want to do in the world."

"Then you are to do it."



“WHEN SHE TOOK ME TO NIBLO’S THEATRE”

“What would Aunt think?”

“Sure, she’s not thinking of you, she’s thinking of Tobias.”

“When she took me to Niblo’s Theatre, she said that was enough gaiety for this visit.”

“Don’t you believe her!”

“Would you like me to come?”

“You know I’m drunk with the thought of it!”

“I knew something would happen to me in this dress. It’s borrowed, you know. We all borrow in Gloucester. When a girl goes away on a jaunt, the stage stops at every door to let her get additional pieces of finery. The last girl who wore it fell in love—and married,” she said impishly. “And now you want it to go to a ball!” she added.

“You’ll dance with me, then?”

“I’m afraid to!” There was a double meaning in the words. She feared the room full of strangers, but she wanted him to know that she feared him more.

"Shure, now, do, dear!" he said. "I'm sailing home to-morrow!"

The word "dear" did not seem to strike her ears. A strange new terror was struggling with her.

"Home to Ireland!" She gasped.

He turned away. Her changing face hurt him. Suddenly he clenched his hands, as a man in pain would. Like all his race, he wasn't clever at disguising his real feeling.

"A night is a long time to live," she whispered, creeping closer to him. His own words had come to her lips. "I've never lived before—"

The room, sweet-scented and ablaze with light, was theirs alone.

He took her hands in his, and her wild breath touched his face.

CHAPTER V



JULIA CRAWLEY stood before the mirror in her little bedroom. Her eyes gleamed and her breast heaved. Sometimes her lips burst into a gay air, "*When Cupid comes marching down Broadway,*" a song that was the rage in New York parlours. Now she tied a fresh ribbon about her waist, and then began to sew a rather worn fold of her bodice. After a moment, when her face almost touched the face in the mirror in anxious scrutiny, she slipped the thing from her waist and with deft fingers lapped lace over lace until a portion of the garment had disappeared. Then she put it on again. It was the first time that she had ever worn low neck, and she was amazed at her own daring. She felt the eyes of all the old ladies in Gloucester were upon her—eyes reinforced by her aunt's more awful orbs.

She was a strange girl, that girl before the mirror—strange for her time and her period. Captain Crawley, sipping his port, used to take a long puff of baccy and say: “Thrushes, you should have been a boy. Then you could have inherited Beauport. You could have laboured harder than I ever laboured and paid off the back mortgages and the place would have been yours. Being a woman, you cannot use all those wits you have—inherited from me, ahem! So the house will probably go under the hammer when I set sail on my last voyage. Of course old Frizwig [he was the Gloucester money-lender] has n’t a hope of ejecting us while I live. He must go somewhere for his bottle, and he does n’t dare show his face in a tavern. Then you’re here, Thrushes. No two-legged, God-fearing, sea-smelling critter could resist you, Thrushes; you’ve got all your kind beat, even if I do say it.”

Thrushes poured the cheer in that long room by the sea, while the old New England sea

dogs sat by the bleared casements and watched the "*King of Prussia*," the "*Saucy Sallie*," the "*Benjamin Franklin*," and other smart frigates come proudly into harbour. She gave her father's cronies port or canary when the cellaret was flourishing, and on off nights she watered the gin. The Captain used to say, "*Friend, have some of my father's—the General's—port, just up from below stairs where it has been these fifty years*"; or a more common speech was: "*This canary has travelled past the Cape four times—yes, sirrah! four times—and that means how many thousands of miles? It might be in the belly of a whale, but I'd rather have it see yours, sirrah! By the love of Harry, I would, sirrah, and there's my hand on it.*"

Judy the young men called her, or longed to call her, for she was something of a princess in that far-away grey town. She was an uncanny growth for a Puritan atmosphere. You could never be sure what she would do or say. Women pointed to her as the natural result of

a wanton bringing up and a lack of feminine influence. Men found her delightful. No dissertations on worsted work or scullery worries from her; she preferred arguing you down in politics—about which she knew nothing—or tickling your vanity. She was a minx at sparring, but she never barbed her words. When the ring grew hot at Beauport and Julia scored a point, the Captain would toss back his chair with a wild guffaw. “She should have worn breeks, she should. She would have been a Senator. Jiminy cricks! Think of a chit like her downing all you gosh darned land-lubbers!”

He was proud of her, and she was proud of him. She was his sun, moon, and stars, and she loved his true and hearty nature and its trail of petty weaknesses. If he looked upon her as a son to him, at times she went farther and played at being his mother. When he gave a dramatic touch to his hospitalities and called the common sherry smuggled over from Salem

"five-voyaged canary," she always felt responsible for him and watched to see how far the white lies would go. He was very poor, and no one knew how poor but Julia, yet he loved giving his guests the best. He had fallen into the habit unconsciously. Even when dining alone with his daughter he would offer her breast of chicken when it had been devoured at the last party. Of course, she knew enough to prefer dark meat. Her heart used to beat over those white lies until she discovered that he enlarged on things to give his small world pleasure. The Captain had the manners of a lord and the store of a field-mouse. He deceived himself and his neighbours to enhance the joy of living. He let his imagination run riot, and those who discovered him forgave him. Do not judge him too harshly. His daughter knew him better than anybody else. Had n't she laughed and cried over his jackdaw tricks in her chamber under the eaves? But for all that, she had absorbed some of his art of delu-

sion. *The Crawleys were two dear fools, and Beauport was just the little outer building to a castle in Spain. They were like the noblesse in the Concierge who welcomed the daily appearance of bread and cheese with "Tenez! Voici la fricassee de veau et la champagne."*

The night before the stage had borne her away from Gloucester, just seven days ago, the Captain and his daughter sat before their fire. It is cold in that north country in the spring. "Judy Thrush," he said dreamily, as he watched her busily painting the vermilion leather on the worn heels of those old-fashioned shoes that had amused and enchanted Sir Cyril,—"Judy Thrush, you look a woman to-night. You look like your mother did when I married her. Gad! how a man remembers. . . . You're not as handsome as she was, so don't poke up that nose of yours, girl, but, by thunder, you're the handsomest woman living in these here parts."

"Flatterer," said the girl, bending nearer

the fire. "You are partial to me because I am yours. I know you!"

After a long silence, while some wet cones were sucked into the fire by the falling logs, he said: "I hope you will never marry and leave me, dear. What would this house be without you, I wonder. . . . You're the life and soul of this hulk of timber. . . . Yes, 't would be a sad place without you . . . only the sea and its stories."

"I thought you loved the sea, father!"

"It talks too much, dear . . . of days gone by."

"Happy days," she smiled in the ember glow. "You have always told me if one has happiness to look back upon one can be at peace, listening to it."

"I'm growing old; I feel it strangely to-night. I suppose it is because you are journeying off to your aunt in York. Whatever should happen to me, no doubt she would take care of you. If the good ship 'Boston Pride' had n't

been wrecked, you might have had a dowry, girl."

"Why, Captain, your sails are limp!"

"Perhaps it's lumbago!"

"You sly-boots, you know you're after a nightcap. You like to be cozened!"

"If Captain Eldridge had a son, or Captain Peppercorn—they both have blood, drat their wenches! There's not a lad in Gloucester for you."

"Why, you know you would n't let me marry anyone. You've been begging me not to leave you."

"I believe in young marriages. None of your yoking stiff-necked old maids and old Betty bachelors." The Captain brought his hard fist down on the arm of his oak chair.

"I won't marry; that's all there is to it," she mocked.

"You will, hussy, or I'll beat you into it."

"Aha, sir!" She jumped from her chair in the darkness. The shoes were finished.

"You defy me?"

He too arose, with a great show of authority and a terrible scowl.

"I'll kiss you," she said, and she did.

They were always playing at war, the Captain and his daughter.

But she didn't sleep very much that night, although the rain dripped on the roof with its most soothing melody. Something was wrong in the house. Maria had an unhappy, hunted look. When the shop-keepers hinted to the Captain that they could use a little ready money, and the Captain swore at their impertinence, Maria took to starving herself. She had given up long ago attempts to starve the Captain. His open rebellion left her wavering between temper and tears. She was angry with him for calling a tragedy a comedy. That is the Puritan temperament. Still, she loved him in her grim way. If he would not stop eating to pay back bills, she could live on one egg a day. He did not know it, but Julia did. A woman possesses an

intuition that leads her into the secret recesses of another woman's heart before a man has reached the outer chamber. Julia had fathomed a great many things that a young girl is seldom forced to learn, but she met them as the birds meet the rain. There was something in that name of Thrushes, for she sang at the first hint of sunshine. "The sun is off somewhere, no matter how bad things might be!" The Captain had taught her that. But things were worse than usual now. Beauport's rents and darns, its maimed and broken furnishings, seemed to cry out to her for mending. She was the only one who could ever put things right. There was just one way—marriage. The Captain was looking toward it. He had begun to await it as the last good ship on the horizon of his life. Was it her duty to marry ducats for her father's sake? And where were the ducats? Who had ever heard of the Crawleys outside of Beauport? She said in her own mind that she was capable of sacrificing herself, but the old



THE RAGE IN NEW YORK PARLOURS

jade Fate said, "Stand still, nothing is required of you." As she had never known the joys and terrors of love, she dashed them aside like so many cobwebs. In her childish way she said to herself, if she met a man in town who was both good and rich, she would marry him—that is, if he asked her. She laughed over the mental picture of anyone asking her. She had an idea that a man spread a handkerchief on the ground and then went down on one knee in Sir Charles Grandison fashion. Love to her was only a delicious and unopened story-book. Like all the young, her idea of love was in being loved. That ephemeral kingdom thought to be so near heaven, and yet so far from it, was all she asked. In one night her girl's heart was to awake to womanhood, and with another mortal she was to sip of nectar that changes all the world.

Someone in the courtyard touched a bow to a violin, and Julia drew away from the mirror. A tremor ran through her. She remembered

where she was and what she had to do. *She was bent upon wrong according to her aunt's ethics, but the wrong might end in right.*

The spell of a man's eyes was upon her.

Now she studied her own eyes. She was glad that they were blue. The Captain had said that they were beautiful. Did the man who was waiting for her in the hotel drawing-room think them beautiful?

She smiled, fondling the rim of the glass.

Down into the window of that little room the gods were lowering the rope ladder on which love mounts from one star to another.

The hour was made of the sweetness of countless roses. All the common voices of the world were lutes. Every moment was an intoxicating vision. Her being was athirst, and Life was a stream called Paradise.

She blew out the candle and sat down on her shabby horse-hair trunk. The girl never forgot that dream in the dusk. One never forgets the first dream; at all the cross-roads of

life it comes back—that first glimpse of Love’s face.

The musician below sang to his fiddle:

“Love is a rose, a rose,
A dewy, dawning rose.
Earth, heaven, and the souls of men were made
To minister where it grows —
Where it grows. . . .

“Love is a rose, a rose ;
'T is a something thorny rose.
The thorn lasts all the year lasts ;
'T is the flower that comes and goes —
Comes and goes. . . .

“Love is a rose, a rose ;
'T is only a faded rose. . . .
The rose is dead, the leaves are shed,
And here be the winter snows —
The winter snows.”

In that plaintive song she heard strange, sweet things. The Irishman’s voice was in her ears with the constancy of her Gloucester sea. “Judy! It’s almost dark . . .” Simple words, but no one had spoken as he had spoken. No one had called her name in the way he had

called it. "Cyril! . . . Cyril!" she answered the dying melody. When she lighted the candles again, there were tears in her eyes.

He was to meet her in the *Blue Room*, just by the great Chinese vase that one of Johnnie Astor's ships had brought home in the days when sailors traded jews'-harps and suspenders for the loot from shrines.

"Be sure that you are there when the office clock strikes half-past eight, and please don't look any finer than you do now." This was all whispered in his ear, much to his delight.

"I could not look any finer," he had answered, "unless I put on two suits of evening togs."

"Silly boy! When you are very funny, you are quite like *Bill Jones*."

"Who in the divil is he?"

"Oh, he's only a man in a circus who comes to *Gloucester*."

"Well, as long as you don't call me John Bull!"

"Oh, but I do, even if I don't say it out loud. I never see any difference between the Irish and the English."

"Then you don't see me, Miss!"

"To-night, or now, do you mean?"

"To-night," he mocked. "I shall take to my bed."

"You would n't dare!"

"And why not?"

"Because I might be waiting for you below."

"Might did you say?" He was as eager to fall into traps as she was.

"Of course. I might repent and be a real lady and not come."

"Don't repent until to-morrow. There's always time to repent."

Their faces always fell when one or the other said "To-morrow." That was their sword of Damocles. All lovers have one.

As he paced his room, he kept saying the pitiful word over to himself. Old Denby had never seen him in such a wild mood. He counted the contents of his purse savagely, he tore up an armful of papers. He tried to smoke a pipe, then threw it into the fireplace.

"Would you like something cooling, Sir?" asked his watchful servant. The question was conciliatory. Denby was afraid of the mood now.

"Nothing, Denby!"

"Shure yer old pal can do something for you?"

"Nothing, Denby!"

The valiant one tried again and was told to shut his mouth.

"She belongs to Ireland," said Sir Cyril suddenly. "My God, I've never seen the like of her in, or out, of it."

"Where does the Lady Aveline Toole belong?" put in Denby sternly.

"I'm a gentleman," answered the other. "Town is the best I can do for her."

"Shure, you'd tickle the divil himself with yer goings on."

"I love the girl."

"And I loved another, and another; so have you."

"Don't remind me of my infamy. I hate my past—my only excuse is that I did not know that she was in the world."

"I loved Molly Cassidy from Saint Euphrasia a fortnight. I saw her ankles the size of butter pots, and that ended it."

"Don't play the fool, Denby!"

"I wish we were back at O'Grady," said the other plaintively.

"You do, do yer?"

"I am growing to hate this place the more I stay in it."

The youth held up a warning hand. His manner was that of a captain addressing his subordinate.

"Do you know Beach Street?" he inquired.

"I've been there with you to see Pat Mul-

don's father's brother who sold us the passage home."

"Would you know Muldon if you saw him?"

"What do yer take me for?"

"Well, you are not overburdened with wit, even if you have the gift of gab."

Sir Cyril sat down at his washstand and pencilled a note on the back of a torn letter. He seemed in a desperate hurry, and when his pencil had stopped scraping he flung the thing to his gaping servant.

"What is it?" asked the undaunted one.

"That is no affair of yours."

"May I have a look, Sir?" pleaded the true son of Kilkenny.

"At the cost of your own peace of mind," glared his master.

Denby took the thing and stared at it. Then it fell to the floor, and he hopped away from it as if it had been some deadly reptile forgotten by Saint Patrick. In the emotion

that was overpowering him he looked more like a fat church pigeon than ever. "You're daft," he said, "you're daft. . . ."

"I'm not going," said the boy sullenly. There was a drawn look about his mouth.

"They'll be waiting at O'Grady," came the sad voice.

"Let them wait. The place and all its rotten debts hangs about my neck like my own gravestone."

"She is coming to Queenstown to meet yer."

"Yes, damn her!"

"May God have mercy on your soul! May the mither of us all have mercy on your soul!" cried Denby, aghast.

"I did n't mean that, do you hear. I wish her no harm. You torture me, you fool! I'll sail a week later."

"And break another woman's heart."

"Be off with the letter—the favour I'm asking comes late enough, as it is."

Denby stood in the doorway. "May the saints preserve you from this mad folly!"

"Love, love," mocked Sir Cyril. "It is life, all life. The rest is illusion."

"Fine words for you, Cyril Patrick Gournthum Stephenson. They be beyond my comprehension, but if you were as young as when I first knew you I'd trounce you. As for the American devil that has ensnared you, don't ask me what I think of the low-born wench."

"You have n't seen her."

"She's a witch, she is."

"So I've told you."

"I hate her, I do. I could wring her neck." There were tears in his voice.

"Shake your stumps," said Sir Cyril defiantly, "and be back soon."

"How long are you thinking for staying?"

"A week, or a month, or forever. We'll sell O'Grady."

"Your soul would know no rest."

"You superstitious old fossil. I do not fear the shades of my ancestors."

"And you have lost your love for Ireland too, I'm thinking."

"She is Irish, I tell you, as Irish as the Irishest."

"A painted, brazen, forward, wicked—"

"Go! or I'll kill you!" roared the other.

"I'll go," repeated Denby, but he had no intention of leaving his master in his present frame of mind. Aghast at this latest vagary, he crept to the shelter of the velvet curtain just outside the door.

In little more than a minute Sir Cyril passed. With the grotesque caution of a fat man he followed him through corridor after corridor. He saw him enter the ballroom. He watched as the youth gave a man some silver.

Now the form he worshipped was on the staircase. He caught a glimpse of pink and white blossoms. "I'll not change it, not for the likes of him that I love more than myself," was

his vow in a fresh rage. "I'll be true to him and her ladyship, and my country. I'll betray him that would betray himself!"

Someone was knocking. A flood of light leaped into the dark hall. Denby drew in his breath.

Julia stood there, holding the apple blossoms close to her face. Her face was different from all those faces the servant had seen over the shoulder of his master. Some had matched it in beauty of outline and colour, but none had worn its expression. In the girl's eyes a new light was breaking—the light that tells us love is immortal and lifts humanity above itself.

CHAPTER VI



“YOU are before your time, Sir!”

The muslin gown seemed to have lengthened, the low-cut neck gave the girl's head a queenly grace. Sir Cyril was half afraid of her.

“I could not wait a bit of a minute more—shure, I just could n't.”

“Well, as long as you weren't late I'll forgive you.”

“You forgive the early bird?”

“Of course—he could always get the breakfast for one.”

“Oh, you sly boots, Irishmen are late at rising.”

“Not if I know them.”

“Do I look fine enough?” she whispered in his ear.

"You look as fine—as fine." He drew in his breath. There was nothing fine enough to compare her to.

"What if they would n't let me in?"

"Look at me arm!" He held out a round muscular arm for her to admire.

"Are n't you afraid that I may dance all over their feet?"

"Whose feet, pray?"

"The people who are really invited."

"Did I not ask you to come?"

She shook her head at him saucily.

"Is n't my wanting you—just my wanting—enough for you?"

She lifted her eyes to him, and he saw their radiance, and something joyous and yet like steel flickered near his heart.

There was no turning back now. He would win her by fair means or foul. The fabric of his life that Fate had been weaving so carefully could be torn into shreds. It is the Irish temperament to throw everything into the stream

of a wild emotion. *What is place and power without love, and if love meets love and goes grandly to the sacrifice, who dare call it immoral? This was his flaming argument. This was his duel with his finer nature, the nature that was capable of transcending passion and sacrificing itself.*

Gotham was coming in the many doors of the Astor House, through its Grand Lounge and up the steep side staircase where the fair sex were forced to cling to its narrow hand-rail to save their skirts from ballooning. There were streams of excited chatter, the prelude of a ball.

Stately old-time New York—there was something serene about it, something big-hearted and kind. Each man was sure of his position, and wives and children stood staunchly by that position, whatever it was. There was no shame in belonging to families whose honesty and industry had made its city one of the coming capitals of the world. The reign of the American

noble was unthought of. There were only two or three coats-of-arms in the city, and those were hidden by their owners as not being quite in keeping with a republic. Everybody bowed to everybody else, for they were a simple people, and they knew that the laws of caste are too complex to fathom. It is only when a nation becomes complex that the laws of caste seem to grow simple. Can anyone say in America that one man is of better blood than another while the sons of the men who made it what it is are unrecognized? Some day it will revise its absurd social system and get back to the spirit of true democracy that pervaded the Astor House on that long-forgotten night. Gotham smiled on true worth and attainment then—on the arts. “What part are you playing in this drama of Freedom?” was its cry. Hand in hand, it came hurrying into that old hotel.

They stood looking at the crowd, and many in the crowd looked back at them. Spring had never yielded lovelier flowers.

"I feel it is just a fairy-tale and it's not true—say I'm not dreaming," she said.

"We are both dreaming!" was his answer.

"I am holding my ticket very tight!"

"I am holding you very tight!"

"Why, I haven't your arm."

"No, but—" He pointed to his heart—remember his period.

She was wishing the Captain could see her. She heard him calling her Lady Cyril.

She did n't know what the words were, but he was saying something. She followed the curve of his lips, she felt one of his hands clasp hers. She knew that it ended with "I love you!"

She drew in her breath and was silent.

"I love you more than any woman in the world!"

"When did it begin . . . Cyril? This afternoon, or when you saw me coming out of St. Paul's?"

"Oh, my darling, it began long, long ago, in some other world."

"Do you know, I think you are the man who has been coming over the sea for me always. You have come to rescue me, Cyril. You're my Viking!"

"Am I?"

"Dearest, you are not so poor, are you?"

"Shure, no!"

"I'm so very poor."

"We could live in Boro Wood."

"The Captain would like me to come back to Beauport in a coach and four."

"The funny old Captain! We must drink a toast to him to-night."

"Oh, I wish that he could see me—I wish that he could see me now. I thought of it the first moment when I knew you loved me. I mean so much to him. You don't know what I am to him. He's counting the hours most likely until I get back to him."

"I love you—Thrushes." He looked at her, his eyes gleaming, and then a mist came to them. There are so many saints in Ireland

that a part of one of them gets into every man, although he does n't always know it.

She did not speak, and he said again: "It just breaks my heart to love you. While I am loving you I am sick with apprehension that something is going to happen to one of us. I fear you are going to die, or love somebody better than you love me."

"I should like to kiss you once," she whispered in his ear.

She did n't, for Tom Jenkins was up from the bar to see the pageant of the night and came over to the man he called his "friend."

"Gee, she is a corker, a reg'lar Jenny Niblo; you've got the prize to-night." All this was shouted in the astonished Irishman's ear.

What could any chap do but throw out his chest a little more?

"Deuced pleasant sort, is n't he," said Sir Cyril, "even if he is a bit in the way?"

"I did n't hear a word," she said. "I was

thinking of Aunt giving Uncle Tobias his medicine."

He threw back his head and laughed. Then he whispered, "Kiss me now."

"I couldn't, really; the Captain says, 'Never take your eggs to the same market twice.' Besides, it's much too bright. I only wished to kiss you, you know. I might not like it at all when I did it . . . And if I did it you might not ask me to do it again. That would be awful. Perhaps the Captain wouldn't like it. I must not forget my duty to the Captain."

He pretended to be very sad.

"The Captain never told me not to kiss you."

"Kiss me now; it is dark here just by these bay trees."

"There are only two trees and it is not dark enough," she pouted.

"I'd give a year of my life for one kiss!"

"Shure, would yer?" she mocked.



"KISS ME NOW"

"Make me happy, love . . . make me very happy . . ."

"Who is that man who is watching us?"

He turned and scowled at Denby.

"I think he wants you to go to him."

"Well, I won't go. He's my man—the old idiot. I'll fist him soon unless he takes himself off."

"He has frightened me, he looks so stern."

"The old ill-natured creatur'!"

"I could n't kiss you now."

"Could n't yer, me darling?"

She hung her head. "Perhaps it's not right. Perhaps I should not. The Captain's last ship never came home. A kiss is the only dowry I'll bring a man. A kiss is my very all . . ."

"Don't kiss me yet . . ." He too was afraid.

Behind the yellow curtains so luminous with light the band had begun the first dance. The horns and drums proclaimed a reel.

"That air, what is it?" she asked eagerly.

“Of course I know—they play it for the Gloucester Troop when they march to Boston.”

“It’s ‘The Girl I left behind Me,’” he answered.

Her voice was very low when she spoke again. “Come closer!” she said. Then she kissed him on the forehead.

They danced in that great room as moths dance in the light. He seemed to be trying to whirl her off to some distant place, and when the apple branches stopped him at one corner of the room he was off to another. Each had visions. For long periods they would not speak. Sometimes she would laugh softly to herself, and when he asked her the cause of her mirth she would say “Happiness.”

He danced with pain tugging at his heart. The scene and the place dazed her evidently, for she no longer played with him. Between the dances she would sit close to him like a frightened child. Then her sweetness was a torture.

If she had only gone on being high-spirited and flippant, but this unconscious appeal to his protective instinct was more than he could bear.

When they sat out dances, the Irishman's eyes would wander to the blue windows where the curtains were still undrawn. O'Grady was there in the starlight, a grey ghost. It was a banshee wailing to his honour to rise and flee.

"Julia," he said in mad impulse, "if something happened—if I had to go on the 'Britannia' to-morrow."

"But you won't have to," said the woman.

"If I did—if there were forces stronger than we are?" Now he was in his barren fields with his people.

"I could go back to Beauport . . . I could wait . . ."

"Suppose the waiting was just . . . waiting . . ."

"I should grow old and take to a cap and a cat perhaps. I won't say that I would n't

look off over the sea—we all do that in Beauport. I could hope.”

“There must be living that is worse than death—days, and nights, and months, and years, of terrible wanting. I never knew the hell life might be until to-night.”

“Hell or heaven,” she said, “it will be heaven to remember. It will be heaven to think of to-day, to-night. Ah, but they won’t take you away from me . . .”

“Dance!” he said wildly. “Dance! . . .”

That waltz began the killing of her dream. A coach was lost on the way to Beauport . . . The Captain by the door never rose from his chair smiling . . . There were no lights in the windows for her . . . The wines her old friends drank were the same old watered wines. The road ended at Gloucester. There was no beyond. It was night there . . . black night . . . The sea was moaning . . . To those who have seen Love’s face vanish the sea offers no siren music, no consolation.



"IT WILL BE HEAVEN TO REMEMBER."

"You love me, Cyril?" she pleaded.

"More than anything on earth."

"Your face is so white. I do not know what it is that is troubling you . . ."

He turned away.

"You have gained the highest tribute on earth. The love that sacrifices itself."

She tried to follow him.

"As you love me, beware of me now . . . hurt me . . . wound me . . ."

"Oh, I do not understand . . . I do not understand . . ."

The music rose divinely sweet . . .

"Dance me," she whispered. "Dance and forget!"

They danced until they were exhausted. The wondering room looked at them, but they were oblivious of the room.

Finally she grew faint in his arms.

"Poor little thing," he said. "If I had only loved you less!"

"I love you," was all she said. Then she

whispered, "Something has come between us, but I do not know what it is."

He saw Denby in the doorway and made toward him with her on his arm.

"Here's a letter, Sir."

Sir Cyril hesitated to open it. He thought that it was the reply from his shipping friend in Beach Street.

"It's from Lady Aveline," said Denby.

"Lady Aveline?" repeated the girl.

"Aveline!" . . . the boy's face could grow no whiter.

"Who is she?" Julia's words were very low.

"His affianced wife!" said the servant gruffly. He had been a soldier.

CHAPTER VII



THE three stared at each other like people walking in their sleep.

“Tell him to leave us,” the girl said thickly.

“You are not going to faint, dear?”

“The Captain would shoot you if he heard you say that. No Crawley woman has ever fainted. Don’t you know that women can bear things as well as men?”

“Every word you say hurts me. I was going to tell you—at the end of each dance I wanted to tell you, but I could not. You are so sweet and clean I thought that you might not care for me if you knew that I was engaged to another.”

“Perhaps it would have been kinder.”

That was the only reproach she made.

“I want to give her up. I sent Denby to change the passage. I could starve with you

at O'Grady and be happy. *If I jilted Aveline, there would be you, and I, and the bailiffs for dinner, when we had any.*" He tried to laugh.

"Does she love you?" she asked.

"Her letters say so — see this one."

"I could not read her letter."

He put it back in his pocket.

"Did you give her your word that you would marry her?"

"I did, but that means nothing now."

"It means everything.

"I could not love you without honour. I do not mean quite that, but I could not love you smiling as I do. . . . See . . . I am smiling, dear. You have honour, though you have been fighting with it all the time we danced. I knew you were suffering . . . The Captain says, 'A man without honour is dead-sea fruit.' Life can rob us of everything but honour."

"You are wonderful for one so young," he said. "I know I have less that is fine about

me than any Stephenson who has gone before, but you could make even Satan pure."

They left the hot room and went out under the bay trees. They sat very much in the shadows lest Miss Hone should find him and try to be kind.

"To think that a girl should be teaching me to be brave! If you had been different, I might have been so weak. I must sail to-morrow. I must send Denby to the ship in an hour or two."

"I only fear loneliness," she said. "Perhaps God is giving it to me for a reason."

He began beating his chest with his arms. "It is such a topsy-turvy world," he cried. "No wonder men make mistakes. If a man could always meet an angel like you."

"Remember the Captain says that 'all women are angels.'"

"Remember he left out Aunt." Something like a smile came back to his face.

"Listen, dear. I have the Irish changeful-

ness, and you have your dear child dreams—dreams that want a man to be a god—and if they shut us up in the same house together you might be saying to yourself a dozen times a day, ‘I wonder if he’s the man I loved.’ I’m not nearly so big a chap as you think me! I’d be bound to disappoint you! You see, dear, our love is dancing up among those fading stars now. If Fate had been kinder and we had dragged it down to earth . . . perhaps.”

For answer she nestled closer in his arms. “I should not have been afraid,” she whispered. “I know I am young, but it seems to me that our ideals are the only things that life cannot take from us if we live toward them. You will always be my knight riding through the tangled forest of this world toward the sun. If you nearly forgot the quest, if you grew weary or fell by the way, ah, I could forgive—I could forgive you everything.”

“That is love, dear,” he said, with a new note in his voice. “That is the love I have



"OFF THERE IN GLOUCESTER, DREAMING OF YOU"

sought long to find. Oh, my God, you must come with me, you must . . .”

He seized her in his arms and covered her face with passionate kisses, but her lips she held back from him. Once she gave a frightened cry, and tears came to her eyes. “Remember her,” she said, “remember your promised wife, remember your honour!”

“What is honour, to stand between you and me? You are my woman and I am your man—to-night is the Garden of Eden.”

“The Captain says that the one you can lead into sin, someone else can lead into sin.”

“You mean that those who are weak are seldom faithful—that if I jilted Aveline and you went with me you wouldn’t trust me.”

“I should trust you because I love you, and that would mean that you could break my heart—I don’t say that you would, dear, but one day you might find another woman who

appealed to you — you have loved many women,” she said sadly.

He turned from her and looked into the darkness. There were faces of those women he had loved, each robbed of its little hour of illusion. He knew the ache of the world then, that every sin must be paid for.

“My body is fainting with anguish, but my heart is strong now.” Her voice had the low break in it, the wistful thrushlike quality that always charmed him. “You will live in my heart forever, Irishman, and I shall live in yours. While I have faith in myself and faith in you, my heart will be strong. It will be the spar that will keep me up in whatever shipwreck life brings. Love denied its earthly paradise does not break hearts. It is sin and disillusion that hurts them. When I look to the rim of the sea off there in Gloucester, dreaming of you . . . hoping, dear . . . I shall still be smiling . . . always think of me smiling . . .”

He no longer called her poor little thing;

under all her graceful moods this divine spirit had been watching.

The dawn was breaking, and over tall roof tops and ghostly trees came shafts of silver light that seemed to hang betwixt earth and heaven. In a moment they had vanished, and up to the two at the window came the cold wind that had crept into the sleeping streets.

They stood very still, like people left in a deserted world. At their feet was a little cloud of torn apple blossoms that her arms had crushed upon her breast, and from the ballroom below came that half-rollicking, half-tender air, "The Girl I left behind Me."

Their eyes met.

"Say you love me," he murmured, "that after fate is done with us here we shall meet again and love."

They heard a bird break into song in the churchyard; then the sunlight touched their pallid faces.

He looked at her, so young and alluring.

The dawn gave her quaint old-fashioned garments a new grace as she began to mount the stairway. When she reached the top, she turned to him again and looked back. He was still standing there.

THE END



